

Intangible Cultural Heritage Update

News and notes on
Newfoundland and Labrador's
Intangible Cultural
Heritage Program

October 2012
ISSN 1918-7408

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Heritage Foundation of NL



In this issue:

- Page 1 Avalon Folklore Project
- Page 2 Weaving in the Woods
- Page 3 Making Memory Maps
- Page 4 High Steel
- Page 5 Welcome new HFNL staff

Avalon Folklore Project Update

By Dale Jarvis

In an earlier edition of this newsletter, I mentioned the Avalon Folklore project we've started here at the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (HFNL). Since 2008 HFNL has worked to provide a broad range of training workshops throughout the province. While this approach has reached a lot of communities, there is often little opportunity for follow-up support, or on-site guidance, as community groups develop their own projects.

In response to this lack of follow-up, we have developed a project-based training program to help community groups. In this model, we work with a group to develop some kind of ICH project.

In this newsletter, you'll learn about two workshops we will be running in November, both of which are tied to this idea of project-based training.

The first is a workshop on pillow-top making, a traditional fabric craft that was traditionally done by men working in lumber camps (see photo above). Over the past months, I've been working with Dr. Jillian Gould of Memorial University's folklore department and her FOLK 6740-Public Folklore graduate students to organize the workshop. Students have been given the opportunity to plan how the workshop will run, to interview the tradition bearer involved, to create media releases, and to work with a graphic designer to create a poster. During the workshop, the students will document the process and participants. The second workshop is on making memory mapping, and is intended to be part of a larger project on cultural mapping that we'll be developing in partnership with the community of Arnold's Cove. Stay tuned for more information yet to come on our January 25th workshop in that town.

Both November workshops are open to the public, though pre-registration is required as seats are limited for each. For more information on these two events, read on!

Weaving in the Woods: Recreating a Lumberman's Pastime

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador and Memorial University's FOLK 6740 class present a Pillow Top Workshop at Cochrane St. United Church on Saturday, Nov. 3rd, 2012 from 1-4pm.

What are pillow tops? Woven with wool on wooden frames, these Newfoundland textiles were traditionally crafted by lumber camp workers to be gifted to their sweethearts or sewn onto pillows, used as throws or even placemats.

Today, this handcrafted tradition is being carried on by Elizabeth Murphy of the Burin Peninsula. She grew up in a house where crafting pillow tops was a winter pastime and learned to make them from her parents in the early 1960s. This is a skill which she has gone on to teach for several years.

"This is a great opportunity to learn more about this little known craft, and for our students to connect with their surrounding community and their local heritage," says folklorist Dr. Jillian Gould, the Memorial professor behind the class organizing this workshop.

On November 3rd, interested community members can participate in a hands-on pillow top workshop led by Elizabeth.

Registration is required with a fee of \$20, which includes the use of necessary tools to make a pillow top (specialized weaving frame etc.) and detailed instruction.

Workshop organizers would also like to hear from members of the public who have made pillow tops in the past and would be willing to share their memories, particularly former lumber camp workers.

For more information please visit www.mun.ca/ich.

To register, please contact:

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(Workshop poster by Graham Blair)

Memory Map Workshop with Marlene Creates

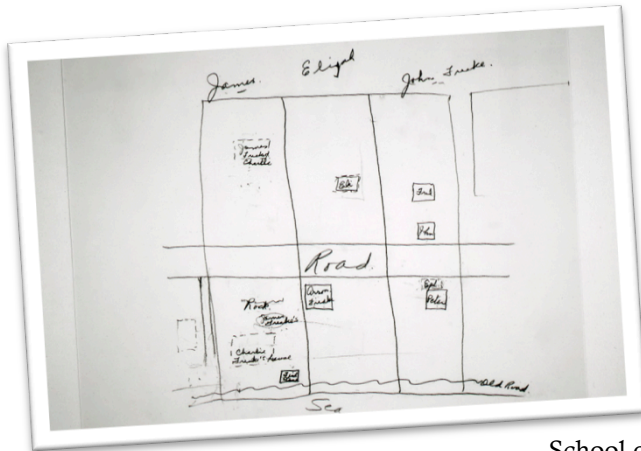
Memory maps are subjective drawings based on personal experience in, and perception of, a specific lived place. This is a device Marlene Creates has used in her teaching and in her own artwork for over 30 years. Drawing memory maps can help you remember, record, interpret, investigate, and communicate both present and lost attributes of local places and everyday life — ones not normally registered in the larger historical record. This is an excellent device to stimulate conversation for anyone doing oral history research.

Marlene will show examples from her own works based on memory maps that were drawn for her by elders in various areas of the province: Inuit and Settlers in Nain and Hopedale, Mushuau Innu in Davis Inlet, and her own elderly relatives in Lewisporte and Joe Batt's Arm, as well as from some of the multi-disciplinary place-based projects she has done with other adults and over 2,000 schoolchildren in the province.



About the instructor

Marlene Creates is an environmental artist and poet who lives in Portugal Cove. She was born in Montreal and in 1985 she moved to Newfoundland, the home of her maternal ancestors who were from Lewisporte and Fogo Island. Her artwork, spanning more than three decades, has been an exploration of the relationship between human experience, memory, language and the land, and the impact they have on each other. Since the 1970s her work has been exhibited in over 300 solo and group exhibitions across Canada and internationally. She has been a guest lecturer at over 150 institutions, including the National Gallery of Canada, the Glasgow



School of Art, the University of Oxford, the University of Kent at Canterbury, the University of Hartford, and many Canadian universities. This year, she was a plenary speaker at Space + Memory = Place, the biennial conference of the Association for Literature, Environment, and Culture in Canada.

Saturday, 10 November 2012, 1pm-4pm

MMAP Gallery (Old Art Gallery Space)

Arts and Culture Centre, St. John's, Newfoundland

Workshop fee: \$20

Pre-registration required.

Contact Nicole at nicole@heritagefoundation.ca or call 709-739-1892 ext 6

Image credits.

Top: Memory map of Flowers Bay drawn by George Flowers for Marlene Creates, Hopedale, 1988; excerpt from the series *The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories, Labrador* 1988; collection: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Bottom: Memory map of Freake land in Joe Batt's Arm drawn by Bert Freake for Marlene Creates, 1989; excerpt from *where my great-grandmother was born*, in the series *Places of Presence: Newfoundland kin and ancestral land*, 1989-1991.

Memories of Working High Steel: Joe Lewis of Conception Harbour

By Nicole Penney

As skyscrapers climbed to greater heights in the late nineteenth century so did the Newfoundlanders who helped build them. Balancing along beams sometimes no more than a foot wide, they worked high above the clouds. Groups of Newfoundland

iron workers felt the rush of high steel as they raised such projects as The Sears Tower and The World Trade Center. Many carried on the iron work tradition of their fathers and brothers, travelling to California, Toronto, New York and Philadelphia.

Joe Lewis of Conception Harbour followed in his father's footsteps, who had been killed working high steel. Lewis worked for some time in New York, moving there in 1965 after marrying an American born woman. Her father was also a high steelworker from Newfoundland.

Lewis describes, "working a bit of everything", but connecting was what he did most. This consists of bolting together large steel beams while on the outside of a structure. At the time, the connector could not wear a harness or be tied off.

When asked if he was ever scared, Lewis replies, "It was like anyone working in an office. You had to do it and that was it. You never had it in your mind that it was dangerous."

"It was all according to what you were at. If you were on the outside of a building and it was windy you had to watch more."



Lewis describes competition with other groups of workers, known as gangs, as one of the challenges of the job. Management would put a group of Newfoundland workers and Mohawk workers next to each other in order to get a job done faster.

"I think that was their idea, now that I think back. We'd try to jump (to the next storey) before they would and if we jump before they do that means we're the best gang that's on the job."

While the competition was challenging, Lewis smiles as he remembers, "we used to have a lot of fun. You'd get up in the morning and be happy to go to work. The competing, and especially when you were way up, it was like you had power. It was just that feeling."

Practical jokes were part of the job in high steel and Lewis describes one he pulled with a fellow worker. Each floor of the structure had a big drum of water, in case of fire. Sometimes when the job was finished the men would dump this water down on the high-ups standing in the street below.

Lewis describes one particularly calm day when a man with the company was standing on the street below.

"He had a big bushy head and we dumped it right quick and we saw it going down like a big bubble. But when it got down to about five floors it spread out right nice and the next thing I see is buddy's big bushy hair go splat!"

When a high steel project is complete and the final beam is placed this is called topping out. Lewis notes, "the company bought beer



and sandwiches for the workers and we spend half the day celebrating.”

The gangs would then erect the last beam and put a flag on it, signed by all the men who had worked on the job.

Lewis worked on several notable structures in New York, such as the Twin Towers, 7 World Trade Center and Rockefeller Center. He came home to Newfoundland during the summers, finally moving back in 1975 when his children were old enough to attend school.

While he enjoyed his time in high steel, Lewis says he wouldn't do it again. “We were playing a dangerous game, but still we got away with it. I didn't really realize what we were doing until now. People looked at you and said ‘you're crazy’, and you'd say, ‘ah, don't be so foolish.’”



Joe Lewis will be part of the Talking Shop: Working the High Steel event at The Rooms, 7pm, Nov 14th, 2012.

Photos: Joe Lewis and his World Trade Centre model, by Nicole Penney; photos of the new World Trade Centre under construction courtesy of Joe Lewis.

Our Newest Recruit – Lisa Wilson

This month the HFNL welcomes folklorist Lisa Wilson to the team as the new Heritage Outreach Officer. This exciting position will have her travelling around the province to assist participating communities in developing plans for their recognized heritage districts. To date, the towns of Heart's Content, Tilting, Woody Point, and Port Union, all have designated heritage districts with a number of historic buildings, sites and landscape features that make them worthy of attention. Lisa will not only help promote these districts, but will also engage with community members to find out what aspects of their districts they find most valuable and in need of preservation.



Lisa brings with her several years of experience in the heritage field. Her interest in Newfoundland's ICH began when in 2009 she chose textile traditions on the Great Northern Peninsula as the focus of her Master's thesis. Since graduating in 2011, she has worked on several projects that have helped to widen the scope of her knowledge within the material culture sphere. She has conducted research projects and written pieces on such topics as vernacular architecture, folk art, craft production, archival photographs, and most recently, cemeteries and headstone restoration. She hopes to apply the breadth of her skills to this position, and learn as much as possible in the process. She is particularly interested in exploring how the development and promotion of these heritage districts may lead to other important community-building activities. We are excited to have her with us and we wish her luck in this new opportunity.

